FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

First Class

To:

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 1083
BERKELEY, CAL.

Railway Passenger Car Annual

ANNOUNCING VOLUME III - 1976

NEW ENLARGED EDITION. Now contains 70 photographs covering all classes of Amtrak Observation cars, LI Parlor cars, Butterworth Tours cars, and all of the remaining CRI&P cars.

All this plus up to date car by car rosters of all intercity, commuter, business, and excursion passenger cars in service on all U.S. and Canadian Railroads including Amtrak and Auto-Train.

Plus a greatly expanded section listing passenger cars in private ownership, plus all transit and light rail cars in service. Car numbers listed in numerical order under owning carrier or authority. Accommodations, prior owners, builder and date built is given for each car.

192 pages, 6x9", softbound, only $7.50 postpaid, ready for immediate mailing.

RPC Publications
P.O. Box 296
Godfrey, Illinois 62035

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Illinois residents please add 5% sales tax).

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

40¢

VOL. 7 NO. 3
FIRST ISSUE OF
FEBRUARY 1977
Issue # 147

Readers Rate the Trains

ON THE COVER:

Crowds board the first SHENANDOAH at an open house in Keyser, West Virginia, home of Congressman Harley Staggers, last Oct 29. This photo, symbolic of the public's support of rail travel, heralds our semi-annual survey issue. Photo by Jack Ferry.

LETTERS

With regard to my letter (see Second Dec 1976 issue) and your response, I confess that I was in error when citing route-by-route costs. The figures I used, from Amtrak's 1974-75 reports, were, I am now told, figured under an accounting system different from the one now used. Apparently the figures I was using referred only to "unavoidable costs". Indeed, figures can be twisted around.

I was most relieved, tho, to see in your last issue that I am not alone in my basic concepts. Believe me, I have no objections to Federal support for Amtrak, and I certainly acknowledge the absurdity of Amtrak's "for profit" clause. While working in Washington I even did a research paper on the question of Amtrak profitability, and the results confirmed my own beliefs--that passenger train service cannot operate at a profit, and that outside assistance will always be required. That doesn't mean, however, that the amount of that assistance has to grow unchecked year after year. It is doing just that, however.

I recognize the precarious situation Amtrak is in, that it is, in a most cynical analysis, a political monster created by Congress. Congress gives Amtrak life (and even gives Amtrak orders) but it doesn't always have to be. Several Amtrak routes are run because they go thru the "back yard" of some Congressional VIP. And I know that in many cases these political routes are near the bottom of the ridership charts and near the top of the cost chart.

For Amtrak to consider dropping some of these routes would indeed disturb the Congressman whose district would suffer, but in the long run, the other members of that holy body might respect the corporation for having the guts to drop the losers and "re-invest" the money in routes with better prospects. Let's face it--now that Mike Mansfield has retired, I dare Amtrak to justify the expense of running two trains from Chicago to Seattle. The "unavoidable" losses incurred by one of them could be used to establish new corridors, double or triple service in existing corridors, or even establish one or two medium-distance trains.

The letter from Carleton Loucks regarding archaic labor laws (last issue) clearly stated what was in the back of my mind. Labor costs are literally killing Amtrak. In addition to the figures Loucks cites, try this one on for size: the EMPIRE BUILDER undergoes 14 crew changes on each run. That is not only absurd, it's obscene. No wonder the Seattle trains chalk up high losses. Reviewing the Amtrak system and working for sensible labor laws are indeed two major efforts that rail supporters could undertake. It would be far more useful than wishing that the 20th CENTURY LIMITED ran again, and the end results (even if only partially successful) would be most beneficial.

A major point to understand is that my letter (and the others that followed) are not attacks against the basic concept of Amtrak... (but) you have to admit that waste and inefficiency exist at Amtrak. You also have to admit that most Amtrak riders, even after 6 years, still can't be sure their coach will have air conditioning or heat, that their sleeper won't be double- or triple-sold, that their food won't be cold, or that their train won't run 12 hours late. ...any Amtrak-initiated efficiency or improvement drives will be most welcomed indeed.

Jeffrey Aberbach
Burbank, California

Rail Travel News, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Whole No. 147). First Issue of February, 1977.
Copyright © 1977 by Message Media.
Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $9.00 per year; single copy 40¢.
STAFF: Editor: James Russell. Editor-at-Large: Paul Rayton. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Los Angeles; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston.

AMTRAK TO REVISE ITS ROUTE STRUCTURE

Amtrak President Paul Reistrup told the Washington Star's Steve Aug this month that the rail corporation is starting the first route re-structuring in its history, as a move toward more financial efficiency. Reistrup said that the corporation intends to drop at least one route that is poorly patronized and has little chance of achieving high patronage. At the same time, one or two new routes will likely be added--routes having a better chance of success. Reistrup indicated that the forthcoming Idaho route has "absolutely no chance" of earning money, but Amtrak must begin operations on it anyway. Losses are expected to be about $3.8 million per year, and Amtrak is spending a half-million to refurbish stations on the route. Amtrak hopes it will be able to decide its own future routes.

For new routes, Reistrup said that a direct Pittsburgh-Cleveland route would get high consideration, plus route restructuring in Ohio and Indiana, and possibly a north-south service thru Washington and Roanoke VA. Reistrup criticized some of the existing routes because they are based simply on traditional runs without consideration of changing populations or the ability of Amtrak to operate on more than one railroad, unlike the former private carriers. An example of this is the BROADWAY LIMITED route, he said.

A committee of Amtrak Directors is studying route criteria now. The Ford Administration's Office of Management and Budget wanted Amtrak to discontinue routes that were subsidized to an extent above the commercial air coach fare. This would result in dropping the INTER-AMERICAN, FLORIDIAN, SAN JOAQUIN, the newly-established COLONIAL, the RILEY-MOUNTAINEER, the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL, BLACK HAWK, SAN DIEGANS, and the Seattle-Portland trains. Presumably Amtrak would not look favorably upon this proposed route discontinuance criterion.

Mr. Reistrup also said he would like to cut the number of access routes to Chicago from 12 to about six. A 30-min reduction in running time on a long-distance train saves Amtrak about $50,000 per year in crew salaries.

PUBLIC SUPPORTS DE-EMPHASIS ON HIGHWAYS

The Chicago Tribune reported this month in a copyrighted article that the Harris Survey had found that a very strong majority of Americans want the government to reduce the emphasis on highways and freeways and build up public transportation instead. A huge 80% of adults polled replied that they support such a development of public transportation. The poll concluded that Americans support a Presidential effort to initiate a strong energy policy, with 72% favoring rationing of gasoline and 74% favoring gasoline price increases up to 50¢ per gallon to discourage fuel usage. The present energy shortage is serious, responded 82% of those polled, and 77% felt that it will remain serious in the next 5 years. In a previous poll in 1975, 66% thought it would remain serious.

CORRECTION:

In RTN's article, "A 'Manhattan Project' to Rebuild Rail Passenger Service?" in the First Jan issue, an important error was made in quoting a statistic. We said that transportation uses 25% of all petroleum in the U.S., while the actual figure is 53% (source: Energy Statistics, DOT report # DOT-TSC-OST-76-30, August 1976). Transportation uses about 31% of all energy in the U.S. These altered statistics tend to reinforce the arguments presented in the article even further.

Reader Henry Korman informs us that he is aware of locomotives that could operate from third rail, catenary, a diesel engine, or a storage battery (the table accompanying our article indicated that trains could not operate from batteries). Mr. Korman says that many battery streetcars have run in the U.S., and that in Germany a few years ago battery-powered railcars that could pull one trailer and had a 350km range were in use.

Readers Rate the Trains

1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9

Extremely poor ▲ Average, acceptable ▲ Extremely good

Here are the results of RTN's fourth semi-annual reader train rating survey, covering the period Jul 1, 1976 to Dec 31, 1976. The figures in the tables are the average (mean) ratings volunteered by readers on the 1-9 judgment scale shown above. The last column in each table is the rank of each train within its group, ranked on the basis of category A, Overall Impression. In this survey we have carried the Overall ratings of long distance trains out to two decimal places to avoid too many tied ranks. If a given train does not appear in our tables, it is because we received insufficient ratings for it. The most recent previous survey appeared in the First August issue, 1975.

Amtrak

UNCONVENTIONAL TRAINS	A. OVERALL	B. NON-FOOD CREW	C. FOOD, LOUNGE CREW	D. FOOD QUALITY	E. CONDITION OF CARS	F. ROUTING	G. STATION SERVICES	H. TRACK & ROADBED	I. SCHEDULING	J. PROMOTION	K. TYPE OF CARS	PREVIOUS RANK	PRESENT RANK
Detroit Amfleet	7.9	7.5	7.4	6.6	8.8	8.5	6.9	5.9	7.7	4.7	8.5		1
Milwaukee Turboliners	7.5	7.2	6.9	6.5	8.0	7.1	7.9	6.4	7.2	6.3	7.6	2	2
N.E. Turbotrains	7.5	5.9	7.6	5.4	7.6	8.6	4.9	5.9	6.2	3.6	8.5	3	2
N.E. Corridor Amfleet	7.0	6.6	6.5	5.6	7.8	8.3	5.9	6.3	7.2	5.5	7.6	1	4
Detroit Turboliners	7.0	7.0	7.0	5.3	8.7	7.0	5.7	6.0	6.3	4.0	6.3	5	4
Empire Serv. Turboliners	7.0	5.7	6.7	6.0	9.0	8.0	5.3	6.3	5.7	7.0	8.3		4
Metroliners	6.8	6.3	5.4	4.4	5.9	8.2	6.0	6.0	7.5	6.8	7.3	4	7
SHORT DISTANCE & CORRIDOR TRAINS													
SAN DIEGANS	8.0	7.3	5.6	4.8	8.2	8.8	7.6	7.0	7.8	5.1	8.0	13	1
BLACK HAWK	8.0	8.5	6.5	5.5	7.5	7.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	2.5	9.0	3	1
SAN JOAQUIN (Amfleet)	7.5	7.2	7.0	3.9	9.0	4.8	5.2	6.5	6.8	3.2	8.4	18	3
BLUE RIDGE	7.5	8.0	7.0	7.0	8.7	6.0	3.7	6.3	6.3	3.7	8.3	2	3
ANN RUTLEDGE	7.3	6.7	7.7	7.0	8.3	8.7	7.0	7.7	6.3	3.5	8.0	9	5
PALMETTO	7.2	7.5	6.6	5.0	8.5	7.7	7.0	6.5	7.9	5.4	7.6	1	6
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	7.2	6.5	5.6	6.8	7.3	8.0	6.3	6.2	7.2	4.2	7.8	8	6
STATE HOUSE	7.0	7.2	6.0	5.8	8.3	7.5	6.2	7.0	7.7	4.2	6.8	7	8
BLUE WATER LIMITED	6.7	7.6	5.7	4.4	7.4	8.3	7.1	5.8	5.5	4.0	7.8	11	9
ILLINOIS ZEPHYR	6.6	6.0	5.5	4.5	6.8	7.2	6.2	5.4	8.0	4.0	4.8		10
PUGET SOUND/MT. RAINIER	6.6	5.6	5.0	4.0	8.5	7.8	5.5	4.2	7.2	4.3	7.2	4	10
SAN JOAQUIN (conven'l)	6.5	7.6	6.5	6.2	6.4	4.4	5.8	6.7	6.0	4.0	6.5	18	12
PIEDMONT (SR)	6.2	7.5	6.1	4.2	6.8	7.5	5.5	6.8	6.7	1.6	5.1	16	13
PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL	6.0	5.4	6.2	5.9	7.5	7.2	4.9	5.4	5.0	2.8	6.2	9	14
Empire Service (conv'l)	5.7	5.1	5.8	4.3	5.5	8.4	5.2	5.5	6.6	5.2	5.8	15	15
Inland Route RDCs	5.4	6.8			4.4	8.2	5.6	6.2	6.1	3.9	4.9	19	16
PEORIA ROCKET (RI)	5.2	8.5	5.5	3.2	5.8	8.0	3.8	1.4	5.5	1.5	6.6	17	17

auto-train

Main Line Rio Grande — Southern Railway System

LONG DISTANCE TRAINS	A. OVERALL	B. NON-FOOD CREW	C. FOOD, LOUNGE CREW	D. FOOD QUALITY	E. CONDITION OF CARS	F. ROUTING	G. STATION SERVICES	H. TRACK & ROADBED	I. SCHEDULING	J. PROMOTION	K. TYPE OF CARS	PREVIOUS RANK	PRESENT RANK
RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR (DRGW)	8.03	7.4	8.0	8.2	7.3	8.5	6.3	7.5	7.6	3.1	7.9	2	1
NORTH COAST HIAWATHA	7.57	7.7	7.4	7.3	6.6	7.7	6.5	5.9	6.4	4.7	7.2	6	2
AUTO-TRAIN (A-T)	7.50	8.3	8.1	6.0	8.5	8.0	6.6	7.3	7.8	7.6	7.3	1	3
SOUTHERN CRESCENT (SR)	7.21	7.3	7.1	7.2	7.0	8.0	5.8	6.6	6.7	5.5	6.9	4	4
SOUTHWEST LIMITED	7.18	7.1	6.5	6.9	7.2	7.9	7.0	7.1	6.7	4.4	7.7	3	5
SILVER METEOR	7.17	7.0	6.8	7.3	7.3	8.3	7.4	7.8	7.3	5.3	7.0	4	6
EMPIRE BUILDER	7.08	7.1	5.9	7.0	6.8	7.4	7.0	6.2	6.8	3.9	8.0	11	7
SHENANDOAH	7.00	6.9	6.4	5.9	8.6	7.3	4.7	6.7	5.9	5.6	7.4		8
COAST STARLIGHT	6.71	6.0	6.2	6.5	6.4	7.8	6.4	6.7	6.8	4.1	6.6	10	9
LONE STAR	6.65	6.0	6.6	6.6	7.1	7.6	6.1	6.7	5.3	3.2	7.2	9	10
CHAMPION	6.57	5.7	6.7	6.9	6.0	7.8	6.8	6.8	7.2	4.5	6.9	7	11
SUNSET LIMITED	6.56	6.6	5.9	6.5	6.6	7.7	5.0	6.2	5.8	3.6	6.9	16	12
ADIRONDACK	6.50	6.9	6.5	6.0	6.7	8.4	5.9	5.9	6.4	3.4	6.4	8	13
FLORIDIAN	6.33	6.0	6.6	6.6	5.8	5.6	5.7	6.4	6.0	4.3	6.8	12	14
INTER-AMERICAN	6.33	6.9	5.9	6.0	6.3	5.8	4.9	6.3	5.0	4.0	6.0	17	14
SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR	6.26	6.4	6.6	6.8	6.3	6.7	6.2	6.2	5.8	4.4	5.8	14	16
SILVER STAR	6.25	5.5	5.3	5.6	5.1	7.6	6.8	6.1	7.2	3.3	5.0	14	17
BROADWAY LIMITED	6.24	6.4	6.5	7.1	5.9	6.6	5.3	4.9	5.3	3.8	6.6	23	18
PANAMA LIMITED	6.17	6.9	6.5	6.2	5.8	8.3	4.9	4.8	6.0	4.9	6.4	21	19
MONTREALER	6.13	6.0	5.7	6.9	5.6	7.0	6.4	5.5	5.6	4.1	6.3	17	20
LAKE SHORE LIMITED	5.99	6.6	5.8	5.8	5.5	7.7	5.5	5.0	4.6	4.4	6.0	17	21
NIGHT OWL	5.78	5.7	4.9	3.6	5.8	8.1	5.2	6.2	6.6	4.1	5.2	12	22
MOUNTAINEER	5.67	6.9	5.1	5.0	5.8	5.9	5.0	6.4	5.1	3.2	5.9	26	23
NATIONAL LIMITED	5.58	6.2	5.4	5.9	5.6	6.9	4.2	5.2	4.5	2.9	4.8	22	24
SOUTHERN CRESCENT (Atk)	5.44	5.9	6.0	5.0	5.3	7.5	5.6	6.0	6.9	4.8	5.8	24	25
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY	5.18	5.8	5.0	5.0	5.1	6.3	5.1	5.5	5.1	2.7	5.1	25	26
NIAGARA RAINBOW	4.64	5.0	4.2	4.7	4.2	7.8	4.4	5.2	6.0	3.2	5.7	16	27
CANADIAN TRAINS													
CN CAVALIER	7.8	8.0	5.2	5.3	8.2	7.5	7.2	8.0	8.5	4.3	8.0	2	1
CP CANADIAN	7.6	7.6	7.7	6.7	7.7	8.8	6.2	7.7	7.2	3.9	8.1	1	2
CN Turbotrains	7.4	6.3	6.5	6.5	8.2	8.7	7.7	7.2	7.8	6.5	8.0	4	3
CN Rapidos	7.3	8.0	8.0	5.3	7.0	8.3	8.3	8.7	8.3	4.0	7.3	7	4
CN Tempo Trains	7.2	8.0	6.8	6.0	6.9	7.5	7.9	7.8	7.8	5.2	7.5	4	5
CN SUPER CONTINENTAL	7.2	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.6	7.9	7.3	6.4	5.4	5.4	7.4	6	5
CN OCEAN	6.9	6.0	6.0	6.7	7.3	7.0	6.0	6.3	6.0	4.3	6.7		7
ONR NORTHLAND	6.2	6.3	6.7	6.7	6.7	8.3	7.3	8.0	8.0	3.0	7.0		8
CP ATLANTIC LIMITED	5.5	5.3	5.7	6.3	7.0	8.0	5.3	5.3	6.3	2.7	6.7		9
E&N Dayliner	5.4	8.3			5.7	8.3	3.3	4.0	4.0	1.0	5.7		10
TH&B Toronto-Buffalo RDC	4.2	7.2			5.0	7.0	5.5	5.2	5.2	1.2	3.5	8	11

As our long-distance train results show, the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR has been rated the top train, for the first time. The RGZ is one of two trains to have fallen among the top four in each of our four surveys to date--the other being the SOUTHERN CRESCENT, which was rated 1, 3, 4, and 4 in the surveys. The RGZ was fourth at first, then fourth, second, and first. And a newcomer joins the top four this time--the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA comes in second after moving steadily and quickly up the list in past surveys: 13th, 13th, 6th, 2nd.

The short-distance trains once more illustrate the power of new equipment to lift ratings. New Amfleet cars pushed the SAN DIEGANS from 13th to first place, even as they increased ridership by enormous percentages. One train, the SAN JOAQUIN, is represented twice in our list, since we had both Amfleet and pre-Amfleet ratings. The conventionally-equipped train rated only 12th, while with Amfleet cars it jumps into third place. "Type of Cars" gets an anverage rating of 8.4, while before Amfleet they rated only 6.5. On the other hand, the Pacific Northwest trains all dropped with the introduction of Amfleet, likely because Amfleet equipment availability was sporadic, and because the new cars meant the end of the well-liked domes on the scenic routes out of Seattle.

As space permits in following issues we will print selections from the most interesting comments and train-ride descriptions submitted by readers.

Many thanks to all who participated in this survey. You may submit your ratings now for trips taken after Dec 31, 1976, for our upcoming fifth survey.

Rail Canada

RELIABLE SOURCES INDICATE that the Federal government prefers a passenger train rationalization plan that includes two main routes--both CN and CP--west of Winnipeg. Decisions from local hearings will be announced as follows: passenger routes to be dropped included Edmonton-N. Battleford (CN); Winnipeg-Thunder Bay (CN); and Sudbury-Sault Ste. Marie (CP). Routes to be retained include Edmonton-Drumheller (CN) and Prince Rupert-Jasper (CN). No decision has yet been reached on some services in Quebec. Hearings on Maritime services will begin about Apr 15 in Halifax, and will also be held in Montreal and other Quebec and Maritimes locations. In the meantime, Transport Minister Otto Lang has met with the Premiers of the three Maritime Provinces and the Newfoundland Minister of Transportation & Communications, and Lang's office reported agreement that maintaining and improving a single transcontinental passenger service would best serve the region, with improved highway and air service for those areas that would lose passenger trains. Canadian rail supporters immediately called the report a "sellout."

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION of rail supporters, Transport 2000, has expressed concern that the planned crown corporation to operate Canadian passenger trains may be taken over by the appointment of a number of ministry officials to its Board of Directors. Transport 2000 wants the corporation to be independent, and should be headed by a professional railroader. The concerns echoed the complaints about Amtrak in its early years which were remedied by Congress's later requiring consumer reps and others on Amtrak's Board, and the move to put a sympathetic professional railroad man in as the corporation's head. Transport 2000 is planning its Second National Rail Passenger Conference to be held in Ottawa Sep 30 and Oct 1 & 2, in cooperation with Algonquin College. Info from: Box 300, Terminal A, Ottawa, Ont. K1N 8V3.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT MINISTRY on Feb 4 announced that 4 companies had bid on new rail passenger cars for Canada: Canadian Vickers Ltd., Bombardier-MLW Ltd., General Motors of Canada Ltd., and The Budd Company of Philadelphia. CN and CP will jointly evaluate the bids, and a recommendation is expected by May 1.

AMTRAK FINANCES - A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

by Dr. Dan Monaghan

Rail travel supporters should not throw up their hands in despair at Amtrak's current financial statement (see RTN, 1st Dec. issue, p. 17). Before pushing the panic button and decreeing that no further expansion of the system is tenable, a closer analysis of the facts should be made.

Prior to Fiscal 1976 the financial statements looked more distressing than now because the common and general support expenses were lumped together and subtracted from revenues to calculate profit or loss. Direct expenses are the costs incurred by a train that are specifically related to its own operation, and they would disappear if the train were discontinued. Common expenses are the relatively fixed costs that are shared by one or more routes such as the large union stations; and the general support expenses are of a similar nature, relating more to maintenance facilities such as the Beech Grove shops. They would obviously not disappear proportionately to the removal of any given route, but would in many cases simply be re-allocated to the routes that were left using the facility in question. As far as can be determined, these two cost factors (common and general support) are allocated out arbitrarily on a mileage basis, which places a heavy burden of the shared costs upon the long-distance trains which run lots of miles and are charged accordingly. But are they responsible for the costs accordingly? Due to the urging of Amtrak Director Joseph MacDonald, the direct expenses were separated out and displayed in a separate column in FY 76, which began to give some inkling of the performance capability of each train.

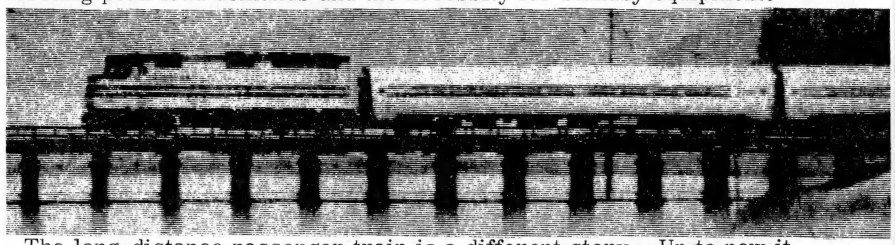
Let's look at the individual service categories: Since the Northeast Corridor is an intense social issue, it will be around regardless of cost, but several observations are appropriate: The Boston-Washington service shows a nominal direct profit, but only the Metroliners show a significant direct profit, with revenues almost twice the direct expenses, altho the final column shows a loss of $13.789 million with its own allocated costs charged against them. If Metroliners had to assume a large portion of the $62 million in costs allocated to the other N.E. Corridor services, it would further discredit them. Not only that, but in the course of an investigation into Amtrak economics MacDonald discovered that some $50 million actually earned by long-haul trains traversing the Corridor were being credited to the Corridor, not to the trains. Their expenses, however, were being charged against the trains! His suspicion was aroused when he found that in a certain division the MONTREALER had enough costs charged against it to pay for 24 crew members! This finding led to a separate accounting of the long-hauls traversing the Corridor, as the financial statement now shows.

In the short-distance category it is interesting to note that only the Chicago-St. Louis and Chicago-Milwaukee corridors have revenues slightly or nearly exceeding direct costs. In the majority of cases the expenses run 2 to 4 times the revenues, with an average (excluding special trains) of expenses dominating costs by 2.16 times. These figures will no doubt improve in 1977, but they cast some doubt on the prevailing mythology of the economic superiority of the short-hauls over the long-hauls.

In 1977 the short-hauls will have a large quantity of new rolling stock working to their advantage. But it is doubtful if new equipment along will solve the problem of the short-hauls. It is difficult to extract enough dol-

lars from any one patron to pay the costs. Many short freight-hauling roads in the East went bankrupt because they could not carry a ton-mile of freight far enough to realize a profit after they paid the cost of generating and loading it. The passenger picture is somewhat similar, plus the fact that the competition is intensive. The patron will probably not ride the train just because it is a train. He will take the best and cheapest way. Then comes the call for faster service. Costs for track construction and maintenance rise exponentially above 80mph, a passenger speed level that must be maintained anyway for safe freight operation at 60mph. Following the call for increased speed comes the call for increased frequency of service. Trains are then added, and one of two things happens: more money is poured into double track, CTC, signalling and other expensive accouterments, or else a direct confrontation with the operating railroad occurs when the passenger trains get so thick that they finally do interfere with freight. Most railroads make such claims long before that level is reached, but a few tolerant ones are realistic about it.

Anyway, a jam-up corridor operation spells lots of dollars and even then the chances for a direct profit are very small, at least for a long, long time until improvement costs are liquidated. Corridors are also subject to the inconsistencies of all transit systems due to the requirement of meeting peak load demands and the necessity for standby equipment.



The long-distance passenger train is a different story. Up to now it has suffered more from the effects of prejudice and neglect than any other service simply because the thousands of people who would like to use them as they do the burgeoning cruise ship services are reluctant to invest the high costs of a long rail trip with no more assurance than they now have of receiving their dollar's worth. This is not to say that every air-conditioning, plumbing or electrical system has failed on every car in every train, but there has been enough of it that this vast market with sizeable sums of money to spend has become apprehensive, and is waiting in the wings for things to improve. The potential is virtually untapped.

In addition, the long-distance train does not require the expensive facilities of the corridor. It can run effectively at 80mph over track that is maintained at reasonable levels for safe freight operation. Neither is high frequency required. One to three trains usually suffice. Revenue per passenger is usually high.

On the financial sheet, 3 long-distance trains (STARLIGHT, SUNSET, and PANAMA) already have revenues exceeding direct costs, and 2 more (LONE STAR and LAKE SHORE) almost do. If the expenses of the long-distance trains are all lumped together, they exceed the revenues on a direct basis by 1.48, as compared to the 2.16 of the short-hauls. If the RILEY-MOUNTAINEER, FLORIDIAN, and INTER-AMERICAN, all of which have been severely disadvantaged, are removed, the factor drops to 1.19--almost at the break-even level. As for the final profit-loss column, the inescapable fact exists that the long-hauls are shouldering over $118 million in allocated costs, a large portion of which

would be re-allocated to the short-hauls if the long-hauls were pulled off. The $52 million in allocated costs borne by the short-hauls would be a less sizeable burden if re-allocated to the long-hauls. Even after including allocated costs, the short-haul loss exceeds the revenue by a factor of 2.76, while the long-haul is only 1.69.

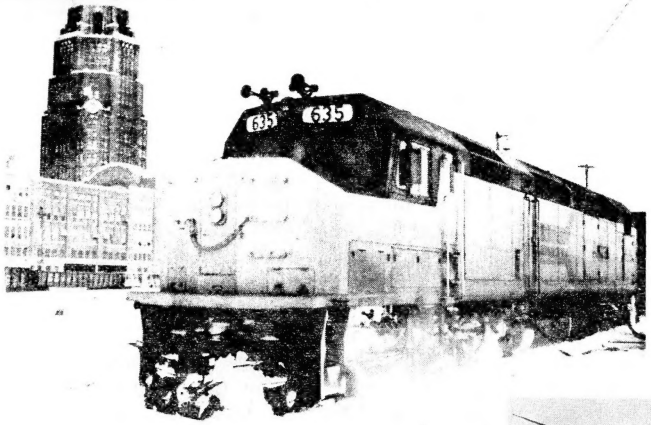
The allocated cost approach is a misleading and dangerous accounting system for Amtrak. Opponents can point to the final column and postulate that the only answer to the "losses" is to meat-axe the long-haul trains. The opponents do not acknowledge that the long-hauls are bearing a large share of the costs that the short-hauls would encounter anyway, and that no dedicated effort has been made thus far to place the house in order in regard to making the service more marketable. Undependable equipment and a thin route structure have undeniably attenuated ridership.

Bookkeeping needs to be changed to lump common and general support expenses together with corporate expenses, appearing as one figure for the entire system. The trains are then judged by their individual performance as registered by direct profit. When this is done, a new solution to the problem of reducing expenses emerges: the obvious strategy then becomes to add more trains, especially long-haul because of their apparent higher profit potential, so that their direct profits can then be directed toward liquidating the lump sum expenses.

When all of this is considered in a realistic light it can be seen that the public's subsidies being paid to a rail passenger system are due to two factors: First, the public is paying for the neglect and oppression of Amtrak by those who have been at the helm of the Department of Transportation for the past several years since the departure of Volpe. This intimidation has drained the energies and resources of Amtrak so that they have not been aboe to address themselves toward making a more profitable operation of the limited system they have. Second, the public is paying for an expensive set of fixed-cost facilities around the country that are only partially used--like a 15,000 acre ranch with only 100 head of cattle.

It was mentioned above that a number of routes could be removed without materially lowering the fixed costs. The costs would merely be reallocated to what remained. By the same token many, many routes could be added without incurring anything much above direct costs. The costs of existing facilities would simply be divided among more trains. A good example would be to add an additional Chicago-Los Angeles train via Memphis-Little Rock-Dallas-Fort Worth-Abilene and El Paso connecting directly with the SUNSET. Only the trackage between Memphis and Little Rock and between Fort Worth and El Paso would have to be activated, no shared facilities would have to be added, and only 5 or 6 small stations in West Texas would be re-opened, and they would be included in direct costs which the long-haul trains seem to be able to cope with when given half a chance.

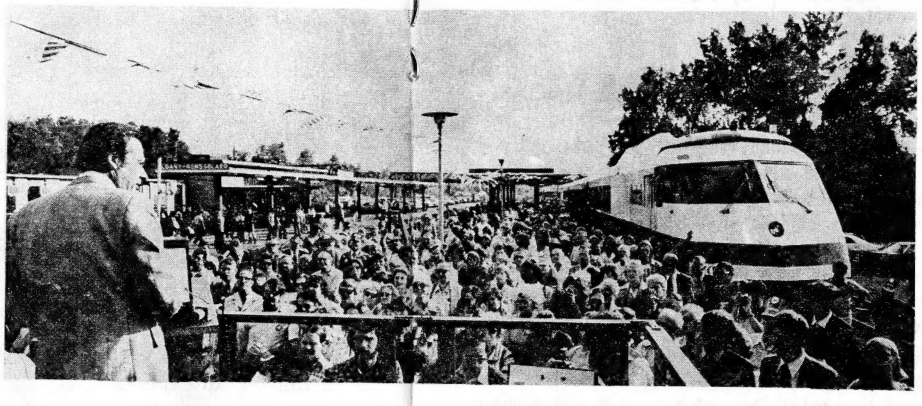
It would appear that Amtrak's best chances for progress lie in adding a number of well-chosen long-distance routes, which will greatly expand marketability, more efficiently use existing facilities, and recruit additional public and political support. It would do well to go easy on the addition of short-hauls until the long-hauls are in place, and the former can serve as feeders in addition to their own localized function. This, coupled with an intensive program to improve equipment reliability and personnel quality, should when better reflected by a revised accounting system which shows that the entire nationwide system is inevitably interlinked both economically and functionally, lay the groundwork for the type of rail passenger system which Congress mandated when the Railpax legislation was first passed.



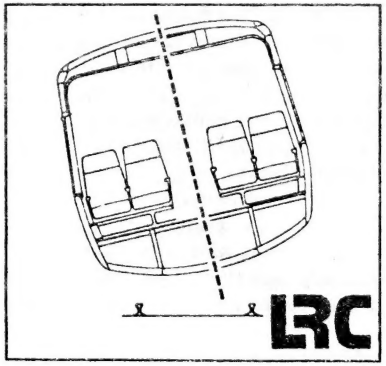
THE NEWS IN PICTURES

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TRACKS?

The coldest winter on record isolated Buffalo in heavy snowdrifts. The LAKE SHORE LIMITED was cancelled from Jan 28 thru Feb 6, and the Empire Service trains terminated at Syracuse. On Jan 22 the westbound LAKE SHORE arrived at Buffalo in daylight hours, 8 hrs late (photo above by Daniel Sage). Ordinarily both LAKE SHORES arrive there about 3am. The train shown reached Chicago 9hrs 20mins late.



LIGHT, RAPID, COMFORTABLE



Amtrak announced on Feb 8 that it signed an agreement to lease two Canadian-built high-speed LRC trainsets to be operated initially on the Vancouver BC to Seattle and Seattle to Portland routes. The trains are said to incorporate a number of advanced features, including the tilting-body suspension system illustrated at left that permits higher than usual speeds on curves. Each trainset will consist of a low-profile diesel locomotive, four coaches, and a combination coach containing accommodations for the handicapped, food service, and a premium-class section. Each locomotive will have four axles and produce 3700 gross horsepower.

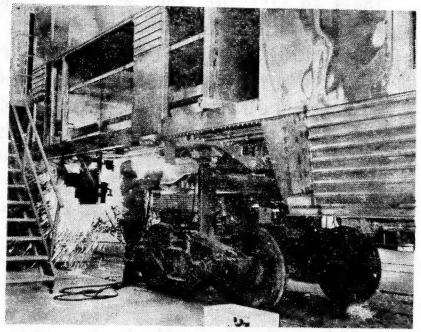
The equipment will be built by the makers, a consortium of Alcan Products Canada, Ltd., Dominion Foundries and Steel Ltd., and MLW Industries Division of Bombardier -MLW Ltd. At the present only one locomotive and coach prototype have been constructed. These have been tested for over 150,000 miles in Canada and the U.S., including 21,000 miles at speeds up to 120mph at the FRA's test facility at Pueblo CO. On Nov 11, 1974 the LRC set a record at Pueblo by traveling 1096 miles in 11 hours 10 minutes, an average of 98.6mph, with 3 station stops for crew changes. On Mar 12, 1976 it attained 129mph on CP's Montreal-Quebec City route, breaking a 40-year-old Canadian speed record. The FRA must complete a 90-day testing program before the agreement can be finalized.

page 10

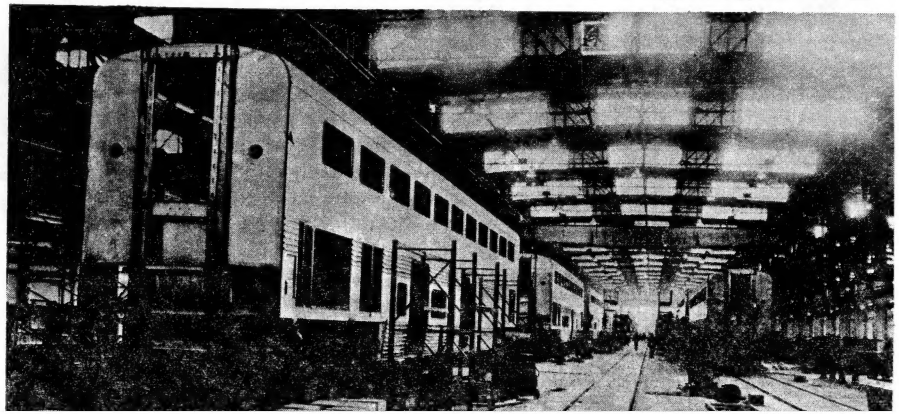
TURBOS FOR THE ADIRONDACK

Amtrak announced on Feb 9 that the New York-Montreal ADIRONDACK would receive Rohr Turboliner equipment in place of its present conventional cars effective Feb 15. The date was later changed to Mar 1, but a pre-Feb 15 preview of the new trains was held at the Montreal station, and the trains deadheaded back to the U.S. The equipment change is an interim one, with Amfleet cars to come later. The 2-week postponement was attributed to weather problems in D&H territory. The ADIRONDACK has a 25-min shortened running time, now leaving NYC at 10:30am and reaching Montreal at 7:35pm; leaving Montreal at 8:15am and arriving NYC at 5:20pm. These changes are part of a joint New York State-Amtrak plan for rail improvements. Amtrak said that effective Feb 15 first class Turboclub service would be offered on all Turbos in the state. Turboclub cars have 2-&-1 seating like Amclub cars. Next October Amtrak will move up the northbound ADIRONDACK departure at least an hour to allow an earlier Montreal arrival. Other NY State changes coming include, in late April, additional service extended from Syracuse to Buffalo and/or Albany to Buffalo. With the Feb 15 changeover, Amtrak added two NY-Albany trains: #70-71, the Mon-Fri HENRY HUDSON, and #77-78, the Fri & Sun BEAR MOUNTAIN. The NIAGARA RAINBOW is to get Amfleet cars next fall if available. When the first Turboliners were introduced to the state recently, Transportation Commissioner Raymond Schuler presided at well-attended Albany ceremonies (Amtrak photo at left).

page 11



BI-LEVELS BEING BUILT: Amtrak in its 1976 Annual Report published these photos (below & right) of its new bi-level cars under construction at Pullman-Standard's plant in Hammond IN. Trucks on the car at right are temporary shop trucks. Note that lower portion of car body is canted inward, unlike Santa Fe hi-levels. First cars will be in service later this year.



BANNED IN BOSTON: CONRAIL COMMUTER SERVICE!

B&M ON SOUTH SHORE??!!

by Peter Roehm

On Jan 7 a truck arrived at Boston's South Station from Philadelphia bearing packages of folders with a message to passengers: discontinuance notices advising that all ConRail commuter rail services south and west of Boston would be ended Mar 13 unless a satisfactory subsidy arrangement could be made with the MBTA. The move was quite unexpected by just about everyone.

A storm has built up over a ConRail request for $8.7 million to subsidize the services thru 1977--a 92% increase ($4.2 million) over 1976's $4.5 million. On a monthly basis the 1976 cost was $328,000, ConRail wants $728,000, the MBTA Advisory Board will allow up to $450,000, and the RSPO ConRail law calls for as much as $522,000. The ConRail proposal is termed "outrageous" by one MBTA board member and a "gigantic ripoff" by another MBTA official.

The affair leaves no question that ConRail wants nothing to do with passengers. Slipshod operation and astronomical subsidy requests indicate this. The Cleveland-Youngstown trains were the first to go, the Valparaiso route is on the line, and Boston may be the next to go.

ConRail's maintenance is all but non-existent, locomotives die en route or in stations, and trains are often late if they run at all, and ConRail tends to cancel its trains at whim and inform neither passengers nor ticket sellers. Equipment allocation is miserable even when forewarned of a sudden crush of patrons.

However, the trains will most likely continue--somehow. One transportation-prone legislator has told those involved to crack heads or there would be a pigeon-holing of vital 1977 MBTA-oriented legislation. But if ConRail gets the boot, who is likely to fill in? The Christian Science Monitor was the first to bring word supplied by this writer: three prospects exist and one of these is favored by experience should its present analysis-in-progress prove attractive.

One party mentioned was the Providence & Worcester Co., operator of much former New Haven trackage in Rhode Island and Connecticut. The P&W was named as it had plans last year to run a Barrington and Bristol to Providence commuter service using 12 ex-PRR P70 coaches owned by the Rhode Island DOT. The deal fell thru as it was part of a larger package covering other matters. The P&W's odds for this service are probably the least of the three contenders.

Another potential contender named by MBTA Publicity Director Ken Campbell is Morrison-Knudsen, the firm that upgraded the D&H's PA engines, and currently the operator under a recent contract of the Vermont Northern RR, formerly known as the Saint Johnsbury & Lamoille County--a 98-mile bridge (including a wooden one) carrier across Vermont's Northern Kingdom. The M-K entry into passenger management/operation reminds one of an earlier sojourn into this area by a larger engineering firm, Stone & Webster, in the days of street railways and interurban electrics. The chances of M-K being successful remain unclear at this writing.

The third and most likely successor to ConRail is the Boston & Maine, which is the only potential operator to be mentioned in all Boston media, as well as in a letter to commuters dated Jan 24. The B&M is presently studying the service and should ConRail be out, the B&M will find itself more likely than not running the trains from South Station. Factors favoring the B&M include its past and present experience for the MBTA from North Station, its local address, and the idea of one operator for all Boston commuter rail, which has long been hoped for.

So far one thing is clear: ConRail will most likely not be the operator of the South Shore services, and the B&M could become the winner. A recent order to Philadelphia for more copies of timetable Form 71 (CR Boston Suburban dated Mar 1976) brought the response that the stock was exhausted and that no more copies would be printed. Would that be indicative of the future?

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

The latest ridership figures, for Nov and Dec and for the full year 1976, released by Amtrak's Market Research Department, are shown below. Long distance trains are ranked by full-year ridership. Systemwide ridership in Nov was up 11% over 1975, in Dec up 9%, and for the entire year 1976 was 7% higher than 1975's total. See the Second Dec 1976 issue for earlier ridership figures.

LONG DISTANCE TRAINS

NOS.	TRAIN NAME	NOV	DEC	1976	RANK
11-14	COAST STARLIGHT	37,084	45,222	440,206	1
60-61	MONTREALER*	29,739	28,550	358,992	2
7-8	EMPIRE BUILDER	24,439	35,185	324,700	3
48-49	LAKE SHORE LIMITED	27,387	31,931	310,440	4
3-4	SOUTHWEST LIMITED	21,183	30,612	301,941	5
5-6	SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR	21,317	26,655	282,431	6
15-16	LONE STAR	18,113	23,493	281,372	7
40-41	BROADWAY LIMITED	20,331	24,086	258,624	8
	Florida Trains**	16,991	22,147	255,898	9
9-10	NORTH COAST HIAWATHA	16,941	26,234	246,269	10
30-31	NATIONAL LIMITED	16,188	19,328	196,709	11
58-59	PANAMA LIMITED	14,319	15,901	196,539	12
56-57	FLORIDIAN	10,662	14,038	162,715	13
50-51	JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY	10,099	12,241	129,136	14
1-2	SUNSET LIMITED	8,043	10,859	107,113	15
68-69	ADIRONDACK	8,080	8,461	103,430	16
89-90	PALMETTO***	10,060	14,110	92,454	17
54-55	MOUNTAINEER	5,509	5,897	70,912	18
21-22	INTER-AMERICAN*	3,754	5,269	44,991	19
166/7	COLONIAL***	4,573	5,349	33,340	20
32-33	SHENANDOAH++	5,403	6,061	11,734	21
	NY-LA thru car via K.C.	324	542	7,391	
	First Class Total:	33,663	44,664	469,663	
	Coach Class Total:	330,858	411,464	4,259,470	
	Combined Total:	364,521	456,464	4,729,133	

SHORT DISTANCE TRAINS

ROUTE	NOV	DEC	1976
NYC - DC Metroliner	174,758	177,697	2,122,896
Northeast Corridor*	696,280	670,667	7,585,595
NYC - Harrisburg	18,340	21,540	205,734
Phila - Harrisburg	68,992	68,987	790,856
Springfield - New Haven	22,444	22,164	226,384
Washington - Cumberland	11,910	15,427	175,320
NYC - Albany - Buffalo	53,354	57,868	598,096
Chicago - St. Louis	24,795	25,952	295,040
Chicago - Milwaukee	22,730	24,973	268,122
Chicago - Detroit	27,720	31,208	370,677
Chicago - Carbondale	13,302	12,438	144,251
Chicago - Quincy	7,247	7,616	84,637
Los Angeles - San Diego	45,509	41,509	465,277
Seattle - Portland	13,630	13,739	143,075
Seattle - Vancouver	7,732	7,585	49,819
Chicago - Dubuque	3,480	4,118	36,569
Oakland - Bakersfield	7,456	7,848	73,064
Chicago - Port Huron	7,330	9,170	89,916
Jackson - Detroit	6,239	6,772	64,278
Minneapolis - Superior	3,272	4,128	38,140
DC - Springfield thru car	1,637	1,957	17,153
Los Angeles - Las Vegas			5,309
Total:	1,238,157	1,233,363	13,850,208
Special Trains:	7,926	515	35,169

*DC - NYC - Boston; & NYC - Springfield.

Systemwide Totals: Nov 1,610,604 Dec 1,690,342
Whole year 1976 18,614,510

*Includes NE Corr. psgrs.
**Average of 3 trains.
***Service began 6-15-76.
+Excludes Chic-St. Louis psgrs.
++Service began 10-31-76.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

SOME RAILFAN PUBLICATIONS have already published schedules of Amtrak's April Transcontinental Steam Excursion, but Amtrak said that plans are still up in the air. We'll bring you the final schedule when it's available. Meanwhile, the Heart of Dixie RR Club arranged an excursion with the same 4449 engine the weekend of Apr 2-3. The first day's trip immediately sold out, and the second day was added, which is also sold out already. A 16-car train will make a roundtrip excursion each of the days from Birmingham to Chattanooga on SR, prior to the Amtrak move..... ANOTHER STEAM MOVEMENT coming up shortly is that of the British Columbia Railway's "Royal Hudson" engine, which runs regular summer excursions in B.C. The train will deadhead from Vancouver to California for display in a number of West Coast cities, but will carry no passengers. It will arrive in San Francisco Mar 23 for its first display stop, and will be there Mar 24-26, after which it moves to San Jose and Southern California, with Anaheim the southernmost point, then back to B.C. with one-day stops along the way, traveling the San Joaquin Valley route in both directions. Final display city is Bellingham WA on Apr 13. The SP reportedly wanted to tow it on its lines, but finally allowed it to run on its own power, except for an assist over the Tehachapis.....

* * *

FEBRUARY 15 TIMETABLES have been filtering slowly in to us. The FLORIDIAN resumed its full operation, in conjunction with Auto-Train, with the first northbd trip on Feb 18 and the first southbd one on the 19th. Operation was suspended Jan 18 and was partially resumed between Jacksonville and Miami on Jan 31. Amtrak leased six U36B locomotives from Auto-Train to resume the service; these operate Louisville-Sanford, while SDP40Fs are used elsewhere. Passengers to Miami will continue to change trains in Jacksonville. In the Northeast Corridor, Amtrak's SOUTHERN CRESCENT has been renamed THE PATRIOT, and leaves Boston 10mins earlier, at 9:30am, adding stops at Mystic CT and Bridgeport CT, reaching NY at 2:25pm. It leaves NY 20mins earlier (2:40pm), and reaches Washington at 6:35pm. It still makes a connection with SR's SOUTHERN CRESCENT, which leaves DC at 7:20pm. Northbound, the 9:05am daily SOUTHERN CRESCENT is also renamed THE PATRIOT, but keeps its previous departure time, adding a stop at Mystic, and reaching Boston at 6:06pm. A new SOUTHERN CRESCENT will leave NY daily at 2:45pm and reach DC at 6:40 to connect with the thru train south at 7:20, and will carry only passengers destined for points south of DC. Northbound, a new SOUTHERN CRESCENT lvs DC daily at 8:50am and discharges passengers only on its run to NY, which is reached at 12:44pm. The FLYING YANKEE which lvs Boston at 6:30am adds a stop at Mystic, reaching NY at 11:18am, where connections can be made with the 11:30 Metroliner to DC. The PALMETTO adds a stop at Capital Beltway at 11:52am. Changes in the COLONIAL's schedule were given here last issue. With the Bicentennial year past, the BICENTENNIAL has been renamed THE BEN FRANKLIN, and lvs Boston at 6pm, 16mins later with a corresponding schedule speedup. The BANKERS, from NY to Springfield, lvs NY at 4:45pm, running 5mins earlier along the line. There are some other minor changes in Inland Route schedules. The SOUTHWEST LIMITED and LONE STAR returned to their separate schedules, having been combined most of the time since last Oct 31. The LONE STAR will lv Chicago at 4:30pm, and lv Houston at 7:30am.....

* * *

JOINT AMTRAK-GREYHOUND release of Feb 15 announced inauguration that date of the "first intermodal bus-rail service in the Southeast." The intermodal route, between Jacksonville FL and New Orleans, approximately covers the route of the proposed GULF WIND (see last issue). Passengers can get one interline ticket with baggage transfer to or from the PANAMA, SUNSET, and Florida trains.....

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN is accepting Amtrak SDP40F locomotives now, with the 40mph restriction on curves of 2° or more, but Amtrak continues to use other engines on BN tracks in order to keep to schedules (see Cars & Consists). Engines are changed where the trains leave BN territory..... THE PLANNED RESTORATION of GG-1 locomotive to its original paint and cosmetic condition is being carried on by Friends of the GG-1 (c/o Phila. Chapter NRHS, Box 7302, Philadelphia PA 19101), who will take donations of $1 and up. Engine designer Raymond Loewy is honorary chairman of the project. Engine 4935 is to be painted in PRR livery, at a cost of $10,000.....

* * *

IT WAS OFFICIALLY the coldest winter on record, since records have been kept from the earliest days of the U.S., in the Eastern half of the country. While trucks and barges were stopped or frozen in their paths, the railroads stepped up activity with the Santa Fe reporting 500 extra carloads daily as a result. Fuel was moved by rail from West to East to help cope with the debilitating fuel shortage. This shows that the nation can't get along without the rails. Even Amtrak reportedly had a 3% passenger increase in January, despite the problems and service curtailments. And in Alaska, where weather was unseasonably mild this winter, the White Pass and Yukon Railway put together a special train to move a Japanese sailor, injured on an ore freighter, from Juneau to a hospital near Whitehorse, taking 3hrs for a trip that normally consumes 4hrs 10mins. Planes were grounded due to fog.... THE ROCK ISLAND has received notice of continued state subsidies, thru next Jun 30, for the ROCK ISLAND ROCKET and the QUAD CITIES ROCKET, while the ICC ponders whether to let the bankrupt railroad drop the trains (a decision is expected in Mar). The Rocket is said to average no more than 6 riders per day at peak months, and some days no one at all boards the train. Anthony Haswell left the Rock Island (he was head of psgr services) on Feb 11. The Chicago Area RTA and the Rock Island have signed an agreement with ICG to repair one RI bilevel commuter coach (#CC-110) at a cost of $110,951.55 at ICG's Woodcrest Shop..... THE BLACK HAWK, train 371, was annulled Feb 2 due to a 16-car freight derailment near the passenger depot at Rockford IL..... NEWLY FORMED GROUP, Citizens for Rail California, will hold a meeting on Mar 5 at 1pm at 1528 Walnut St., #5, in Berkeley.....

* * *

THE ENERGY SHORTAGE may be even worse than we indicated in the First Jan RTN. DOT Secretary Brock Adams told reporters on Feb 18 that at present rates of consumption we could be out of geologic products by the year 2000 or 2010. That's as little as 23 years away, a lot less than the 50 or 60 we mentioned in our article, and gives us reason to push for changes even faster. Fuel won't run out all at once, either; it will peter out gradually, with costs skyrocketing and crises coming thick and fast, unless we act decisively and swiftly to balance our transportation system and make other conservation moves and develop new, clean sources of power. This winter should have taught us a lesson that the fuel shortage of 1973-4 didn't. Here in California right now we have water rationing, natural gas conservation (because we're shipping it East), and are told that electric power will be short this summer. The only thing plentiful seems to be gasoline, which hasn't even risen in price recently. In 1976, California used more gasoline than ever before in history. December's total was 6% higher usage than Dec 1975. This obviously can't go on forever. Secretary Adams told the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee this month that we must deal with the "permanent energy crisis" by developing "cars with greater fuel efficiency, electric cars for short trips, cost-effective alternative fuels, mass transit systems that encourage people not to use their cars, and cities designed around mass transit." He said Americans should not be expected to give up their mobility, which is built around the private auto..... FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION has announced a new program for installing AM radio transmitters near Federal-aid highways to broadcast advisory messages to motorists. Like they could advise them to go take a train.....

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC is asking the ICC if it can abandon all but 18 miles of its San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway, which connects San Diego and Mexico. Much of it was heavily damaged by Hurricane Kathleen last Sep 10. The 18 miles it will retain runs from El Centro to Plaster City CA..... YOU'VE HEARD JUST about all the arguments that the highway lobby can muster in opposition to rail transit systems, but now an economics professor from University of California, Irvine, says that rail transit systems really waste energy because, altho the trains consume less energy than autos, the construction of the system requires a tremendous amount of energy. He didn't mention the energy needed to build and scrap autos, tho. He feels BART is a failure, and that "The new Metro subway system in Washington DC will probably turn out even worse." What's the punch line? "...we should certainly not be considering such a system for the Los Angeles area".....

* * *

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE is constructing two exact replicas of the Golden Spike locomotives to be placed at the Golden Spike National Historic Site in Utah. The full-sized engines, exact in every detail, are being built by O'Connor Engineering Labs of Costa Mesa CA, and will be delivered late next year..... SAN DIEGAN RIDERSHIP continues to climb remarkably (and the White House wanted to discontinue them!): in Dec the increase was 79%, in Jan 72%. And the SAN JOAQUIN in its first month of Amfleet operation, showed a significant 36% increase (Nov), a month in which it had a 100% on-time performance record on its slow schedule, the only such performance in the entire Amtrak system..... THE PANAMA LIMITED, southbound on Feb 16, hit a large, empty gravel truck at 11:25am at a dirt road crossing from US highway 51 into the Gifford Hill Gravel Pit at Arcola LA, about 22 miles north of Hammond. The truck driver was killed and one passenger had a bruised knee. Consist of train 59 was engine 226 (F40), and Amfleet cars 21847, 21848, 20203, 21208, 21201, and baggage 1353. The truck tractor was struck dead center while the train was reportedly traveling at 75mph, and it was carried a half mile down the tracks. The trailer was knocked free and spun around so a corner hit the first car, Amcoach 21847. The truck was a total loss, and the vestibule of the lightweight Amfleet car was caved in badly. The engine suffered relatively little and continued to New Orleans under its own power, arriving after 2pm. The engine and damaged car returned to Chicago on train 58 the next day.....

* * *

W. GRAHAM CLAYTOR of Southern Railway has been named Secretary of the Navy by President Carter..... A SPECIAL FARE on the ADIRONDACK will be in effect Feb 18 thru May 1: a NY-Montreal roundtrip for $27, only $1 over one-way coach fare..... AN EXPERIMENTAL STOP at Winnemucca NV on the SF ZEPHYR route was used by 1964 passengers in its first year, a bit short of the 6 per day average required, but enough to justify keeping it, Amtrak said..... THE LOS ANGELES terminal was acquired by lease by Amtrak Jan 28, giving the corporation exclusive control of all passenger ,baggage, maintenance, and concession facilities used by the passenger service. The 5-year lease was effective Jan 1..... TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ADAMS will hold a series of Town Hall meetings around the country to get people's advice on transportation problems. The first: Boston on Feb 23.....

GOVERNOR-ELECT JOSEPH TEASDALE of Missouri rode the SOUTHWEST LIMITED Jan 6 from Kansas City to L.A. for peace of mind while writing his inauguration speech for delivery Jan 10 in Jefferson City. Upon arrival in L.A., he flew back. His family rode to Jefferson City on train 30 Jan 7-8 and returned Jan 11 on #31..

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR is now using the UP bridge across the Missouri at Omaha instead of the BN bridge at Pacific Jct--in effect since early Jan..... NORTHBOUND AUTO-TRAIN on Feb 6 had a derailment of 8 auto-carrier cars from a 50-rack train of deadheading equipment. They struck a Chamber of Commerce building in Boyton Beach FL and other buildings and struck a set of propane tanks and set off a series of explosions. There were no injuries..... THE ILLINI RESUMED operations Feb 9 after 3 weeks of suspension due to the severe winter weather.....

AMTRAK'S ANNUAL REPORT to the President and Congress was issued Feb 15. Most of the information contained in it has already appeared elsewhere and is known to regular RTN readers. This year's issue is especially graphically interesting, with lots of attractive photos. One table of interest not covered here before is the breakdown of on-time performance by railroad. In Fiscal 76 the top three roads in Amtrak on-time performance were Missouri-Kansas-Texas (97.2%), Union Pacific (94.7%), and Seaboard Coast Line (93.9%). Lowest was PC-ConRail with 53.2% (non-corridor)..... AMTRAK IS RUNNING an unoccupied buffer car in the consist of many, perhaps all, trains using SDP40F engines. The car is placed directly behind the last engine (see Cars & Consists, p.18). The prevailing belief about the engines that are now under investigation is that the rear trucks may spread the tracks at higher speeds on curves if the rails are not appropriately maintained. This is related to the fact that all 3 axles of the 3-axle trucks are powered. If the rails spread from this cause, the first car will be first to derail.....

Urban-Suburban Transit

44,807 PEOPLE DIED on the nation's highways in 1976, according to preliminary figures. This was about 25 more than in 1975, and indicates no improvement in the death toll, tho Washington bureaucrats claimed the highways are getting safer, since driving increased last year and the death rate per mile dropped a bit. RTN still fails to understand this kind of inverted thinking that puts statistics before human lives. If the DOT were doing something about the highway problem, driving wouldn't have increased last year. The last time something was done about the problem was during the 1973-4 energy crisis, when the national speed limit was reduced to 55mph and traffic deaths declined markedly.

RALPH NADER ASSOCIATE Joan Claybrook has been chosen by DOT Secretary Adams to head the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. President Carter and the Senate still must confirm the appointment.

CONRAIL COMMUTER SERVICE between Chicago and Valparaiso IN will be discontinued effective Apr 10 unless some subsidy source is found. Indiana transportation officials are reportedly content to let the line die.

THE "EL CAMINO" is in trouble. Baxter Ward's proposed L.A.-San Diego train has been turned down by the National Arbitration Panel on the basis that it is a commuter train and Santa Fe is not required to run it for Amtrak. But L.A. Supervisor Baxter Ward plans an appeal to the Calif. PUC to force operation of the train in a non-commuter time slot (see Second Nov issue for description of train equipment).

A BART TRAIN split a switch near Oakland's Rockridge Station on the Concord line at 6:15pm Feb 14, blocking the track and delaying systemwide service. Passengers were moved around the station by AC Transit buses for several hours. The train was on manual operation at the time. There were no injuries. BART's Daly City station is now connected with the San Francisco International Airport by a SamTrans (San Mateo County) bus which runs at 30-min intervals at a fare of 50¢.

CHICAGO'S SOUTH SHORE and South Bend RR cancelled 3 rush-hour trains starting Feb 7 because of severe winter weather.

NEW YORK SUBWAY riders are complaining of recent service cutbacks. The NY Times (Feb 19) carries two letters, one of which complains that a normal 20-min trip at non-rush hour time "has now become a nightmarish, 75-minute, bone-crushing ordeal." And a NYC woman writes the Times in support of Virginia Fairweather's anti-subway article described here last issue (Times, Feb 20), complaining of claustrophobia, crime, noise and accidents in subways. She says she almost always rides buses.

MULTIPLE-UNIT OPERATION of PCC streetcars on Toronto's Queen St. ended in Feb due to service cutbacks on the busy route.

FAVORABLE REPORTS ON the Washington DC Metro continue. An extension due to open in July is expected to bring some major patronage increases.

CARS & CONSISTS

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, Seattle Feb 14: engines BN 6319, 377 (F), 334 (E in new paint scheme); cars 2266 "Placid Sea"(buffer car?), 1046, 1502 "San Simon", 4886, 4853, 4508, 4534, 4869, 4531, 3351, 8033, 2658 "Silver Dale", 2713 "Pine Cavern", 2501 "Blue Grove." Same, Feb 7: engines BN 6322, 345 (E), 376 (F); cars 2269 "Placid Water", 1061, 1503 "San Pascal", 4494, 4509, 4856, 4866, 4861, dome 9373, 8035, 2711 "Pine Beach", 2723 "Pine King." (2269 a buffer car?)

*The "hospital train" Amtrak ran from Chicago to New Orleans, of cars for repair: 5641, 5402, 5686, 5801, 5616, 6810, 6434, 6433, 6020, 4842, 6443, 6442, 6447, 5602, 3342, 6435, 6090, 5681, 6802, 2024 "Loch Sloy." Train went L&N, ar Jan 22, 8am.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Feb 11: engines 529, 500; cars 3260 "Wingate Brook" (buffer car), 1186 (off at KC), 1022, 9905, 9927, 3393, 8041, 2729 "Pine Rapids", 2756 "Palm Path", 2633 "Pacific Skies" (NY thru car), 2242 "Homestead" (deadhead NY thru car), ATSF 52 "Atchison" (to Chic. with Pres. Reed). Same, Jan 30: engines 514, 610; cars 3260 "Wingate Brook" (buffer car), 1182, 1057, 9994, 9910, 9962, 9973, 9983, 9902, 2216 "Indian Mesa", 2756 "Palm Path", 2694 (NY thru car), ATSF 133 steam generator car.

*NATIONAL LIMITED, train 30, Kansas City Feb 11: engines 597, 613; cars 4408 "Prairie Sunset" (buffer car), 1196, 1186, 2633 "Pacific Skies" (thru car), 2242 "Homestead", 8026, 5426, 5431, 6022 (to DC), 8012 (deadhead). Train 31, Jan 29: engines 600, 564; cars 8048 (buffer?), 2611 "Pacific Forest" (thru car), 8009, 5430, 5258, 1053, 1103. Train 30 annulled Jan 30 at KC; Continental Trailways bused psgrs KC to St. Louis to meet No. 30 running St. Louis to NY.

*ADIRONDACK, train 69, Albany-Rensselaer Feb 10: engines D&H 19, D&H 18 (PAs); cars (all D&H) 32 coach, 42 diner, 244 coach, 33 coach. No dome due to tunnel ice.

*Cars 1531, 1532, dome 9362, 4433, 4434, 4436, 4891, 4893, 5013, 5014, 5017, 5403, 5410, 5415 & 5436 will receive facelifting and heavy repairs at ICG's Woodcrest Shop. Work will be completed in June.

*ARROWHEAD, train 766, Minneapolis Feb 4: engines DMIR 130, DMIR 129 (GP's with steam boilers); cars 1361, 8351, dome 9473.

*NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 10, arrived Minneapolis 5:20pm Feb 4 and had following units removed: BN 6510, Atk 540, Atk heater cars 1921 & 1912. Left 5:50 with engines 532 & 540.

*SILVER METEOR, train 83, Trenton NJ Feb 10: engine (?) GG-1; cars 1518, 4589, 4565, 4559, 4457, 4554, 3314, 8006, 3228 "William A. Griffin, Jr.", 2695, 2303 "Jay Bird", 2023 "Silver Repose."

*NdeM train 8 (Juarez-Mexico City), Juarez Jan 19: engines 9273, 9216 (GP40 or similar); cars 2955 RPO, 1532 & 1523 express, 3823 & 4045 second class coaches, 4461, 4475, & 4486 first class coaches, diner 3669 "Playa Copacabana", sleeper 612 "Monte Everest."

*PEORIA ROCKET, CRI&P train 12, Peoria Jan 6: engine 654; coaches 2504 (formerly 342), 2502 (formerly 340). All Rock Island equipment.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"I'll stand by the comment I made before a congressional committee some years ago: that, like the stagecoach and the paddle-wheel steamer, the long-distance passenger train ought to be allowed to die an honorable death."

--BN Chairman Lou Menk quoted in U.S. News & World Report, Feb 21.

"Something, then, must be wrong with the accounting. Put on the balance sheet over three decades of federal favoritism for other modes of transportation. Put in the costs of the suburban diaspora the automobile first permitted and now, having gained almost total dominance, perpetuates, levying almost impossible costs on public transportation modes. Add in the decline of the central cities. Factor in the needs of the handicapped, and those too old or too young to drive... Think about pollution. And the land... Oil? How much is there left; what will it cost? Can we assign a value to the sound of a train whistle in the night?"

--Paul Reistrup in introduction to Amtrak's 5-Year Plan.

Express Ads

RAIL FANS ONLY! It's easy to secure your AMTRAK & CN reservations and tickets (or USA Rail Pass)--from anywhere in the world. Tickets by mail from GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market St., San Francisco 94105, or call (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, Pullman, stationery, rules, metal items from 25 railroads. Long stamped envelope for list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. (Will buy large and small railroad collections.)

THAT'S RIGHT! Now you can take care of all your reservations, tickets, and unlimited travel passes (USA Rail, ConRail, Eurail, BritRail) at the Mid-West Rail specialists: HOOSIERAIL TRAVEL, PO Box 1025, Bloomington IN 47401. 812-336-2400.

ALL NEW TIMETABLE GRAB BAGS $10 - A real bargain. Clear plastic slip covers for timetables $7.25 per 100 - Terrific!! We also buy all timetable collections. Tom Coval, 21 E. Robin Road, Holland PA 18966.

RAILROADIANA AUCTION Sat. May 7 sponsored by Pottstown NRHS at the Sanatoga Fire Co. on route 422 East of Pottstown, PA. 400 lots of collectibles - Lanterns, Builder Plates, Timetables, Official Guides, etc. For info write Ted Maurer 1931 N. Charlotte St, Pottstown PA 19464. Inspection 9am, sale at 11am.

DINING CAR ASSOCIATION of collectors and travelers now organizing. Information: Dining Car, Post Office Box 124, Shawnee-Mission, Kansas 66201.

IT'S NOT EASY to keep up with everything that's happening in railroading these days. If you don't now get The Fast Mail you're missing an important news source. We also give you fascinating feature material and comment on today's rail scene. Subscribe today--$5.00/year (12 issues)--money back if you're not satisfied with the first issue. The Fast Mail, PO Box A-3258, Chicago IL 60690

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads $25 per half-page (maximum size--4x5 inches); $12.50 per quarter page. Write to: Message Media, Ad Dept., Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you!

RTN BACK ISSUES: Complete year 1976 (Vol 6), 22 issues $7.00: complete 1975 (Vol 5), 24 issues $7.00, sent parcel post, postpaid, no tax. Order now from: MESSAGE MEDIA, Dept RTN, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

SUBSCRIBE TO RAIL TRAVEL NEWS. Just $9.00 for 24 twice-monthly issues delivered by first class mail. Message Media - RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Amtrak issued the notice to passengers reproduced below this winter to explain the rail passenger corporation's problems associated with the severe weather:

Hard Winter Causing Rail Problems

Dear Passenger:

This winter has caused many inconveniences. Snow has piled up; rivers that for years have resisted freezing are solid ice; and cold winds have chilled all of us, even all the way through the sun belt to Florida.

This bitter cold has destroyed crops, held up traffic on roads and airways, caused fuel shortages, and has done its share of damage to our trains and facilities.

Because of severe damage to our equipment, we have been forced to temporarily suspend a few of our train routes mostly in the hard hit Midwest. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you.

We anticipate resuming train service in the few affected areas as weather conditions improve and when we are able to restore our equipment and maintenance facilities to a reliable working order.

In addition, because of this severe weather condition, some of our long-distance trains are experiencing delays in meeting train schedules.

To avoid any inconveniences, we recommend that you phone Amtrak for train information on your day of departure. Our agents will inform you of changes as they occur. Please use the appropriate toll-free number listed on the reverse side.

Your patience and understanding are appreciated.

Amtrak